UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/751
23 December 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 112

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Igor V. GOUMENNY (Ukraine)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 20 September 1996, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 42nd, 43rd, 46th and 47th meetings, on 12, 13, 17 and 18 December 1996. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/51/SR.42, 43, 46 and 47).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/51/289) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/51/720).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS A/C.5/51/L.31 AND A/C.5/51/L.40

4. At the 46th meeting, on 17 December, the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Member States that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations" (A/C.5/51/L.31), which read:

"The General Assembly,

"Reaffirming its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, by which it requested the Secretary-General to submit in off-budget years an outline of the proposed programme budget for the following biennium,

"Having considered the report of the Secretary-General, the related recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,

"1. Reaffirms that the proposed programme budget outline shall contain an indication of:

"(a) A preliminary estimate of resources to accommodate the proposed programme of activities during the biennium;

"(b) Priorities reflecting general trends of a broad sectoral nature;

"(c) Real growth, positive or negative, compared with the previous budget;

"(d) The size of the contingency fund expressed as a percentage of the overall level of resources;

"2. Also reaffirms that the outline should provide a greater level of predictability of resources required for the following biennium, promote a greater involvement of Member States in the budgetary process and thereby facilitate the broadest possible agreement on the programme budget;

"3. Takes note of the reports of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

"4. Invites the Secretary-General to prepare his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 on the basis of the total preliminary estimate of 2,608,274,000 United States dollars at initial 1996-1997 rates, recosted to 2,574,366,000 dollars at revised 1996-1997 rates;

"5. Decides that the contingency fund shall be set at the level of 0.75 per cent of the preliminary estimate at 1998-1999 rates, namely at 20.1 million dollars;

"6. Notes that the Secretary-General's proposed budget outline for 1998-1999 contains a provision of 85 million dollars for special missions, which represents a serious departure from current budgetary practice, and decides that no provision for mandates yet to be approved should be included in the budget outline for 1998-1999;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, the following information:

"(a) The rates of exchange and inflation used in the outline;

"(b) The outputs deferred, postponed or curtailed in 1996-1997;

"(c) The amount related to the proposed 6.4 per cent vacancy rate;

"(d) The total number of posts for the biennium;

"(e) The impact of activities approved in 1996-1997 that would continue in 1998-1999."

5. At the 47th meeting, on 18 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Klaus Stein (Germany), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Proposed budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999" (A/C.5/51/L.40), and orally revised it by inserting a new paragraph 8, reading:

"8. Decides that the priorities for the biennium 1998-1999 are the following:

"(a) Maintenance of international peace and security;

"(b) Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences;

"(c) Development of Africa;

"(d) Promotion of human rights;

"(e) Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts;

"(f) Promotion of justice and international law;

"(g) Disarmament;

"(h) Drug control, crime prevention, as well as combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.40 as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 8).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.40, the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the member States that are members of the Group of 77 and China, withdrew draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.31.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

8. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, by which it requested the Secretary-General to submit in off-budget years an outline of the proposed programme budget for the following biennium,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General,[1] the related recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination[2] and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[3]

1. Reaffirms that the outline of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 shall contain an indication of:

(a) A preliminary estimate of resources to accommodate the proposed programme of activities during the biennium;

(b) Priorities reflecting general trends of a broad sectoral nature;

(c) Real growth, positive or negative, compared with the previous budget;

(d) The size of the contingency fund expressed as a percentage of the overall level of resources;

2. Also reaffirms that the outline should provide a greater level of predictability of resources required for the following biennium, promote a greater involvement of Member States in the budgetary process and thereby facilitate the broadest possible agreement on the programme budget;

3. Takes note of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

4. Invites the Secretary-General to prepare his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 on the basis of a total preliminary estimate of 2,512,000,000 United States dollars at initial 1996-1997 rates, recosted to 2,480,000,000 dollars at revised 1996-1997 rates;

5. Decides that the contingency fund shall be set at the level of 0.75 per cent of the preliminary estimate at 1998-1999 rates, namely at 19 million dollars;

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[1] A/51/289.

[2] A/51/16 (Parts I and II); to be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/51/16).

[3] A/51/720.

6. Also decides that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 shall contain provisions for recosting on the basis of the existing methodology;

7. Further decides that the preliminary estimate of resources for 1998-1999 does not include a provision for special missions for which there are no legislative mandates;

8. Decides that the priorities for the biennium 1998-1999 are the following:

(a) Maintenance of international peace and security;

(b) Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences;

(c) Development of Africa;

(d) Promotion of human rights;

(e) Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts;

(f) Promotion of justice and international law;

(g) Disarmament;

(h) Drug control, crime prevention, as well as combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, the following information:

(a) Outputs deferred, postponed or curtailed in 1996-1997 and their disposition in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999;

(b) Number of posts for the biennium by section and by category;

(c) Proposed vacancy rate for the Professional and the General Service categories for budgetary purposes;

10. Also requests the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive policy paper which will examine all issues related to the question of all additional expenditures referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11 of annex I to resolution 41/213, including those relating to the maintenance of peace and security, inflation and currency fluctuation, and to submit that report to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, no later than 31 May 1997 with a view to finding a comprehensive solution to such questions.